

Rationale

The rationale for this lesson is to help students understand the danger of remaining uninvolved in the face of attacks on others' rights. Specifically, this lesson will engage students in democratic discussions to promote a social consciousness in situations that could or have happened and arrive at conflict resolutions. Students will use the following concepts and terms by incorporating them in their proper context during their discussions, whereby students demonstrate their understanding of the terms. The proper use of these terms necessitates responsible actions that promote acceptance, understanding, tolerance, and conflict resolution. From this lesson, students will learn to take responsibility for maintaining an open, tolerant society, and for safeguarding democratic institutions and values as citizens of a democracy. Students will be provided with opportunities to interact with each other and express viewpoints from different perspectives.

Terms:

- Tolerance
- Diversity
- Acceptance
- Appreciation of other cultures
- Alternate strategies for handling conflict
- Stereotyping
- Bystander

Strategies

In small groups, students will discuss and arrive at resolutions for different scenarios that could occur or have occurred in the past. These scenarios involve sensitive issues which will give students an opportunity to analyze and an opportunity to resolve through sharing their ideas and opinions and collectively finding a course or courses of action. They will understand that their course of action, or lack of, could bring about certain unwanted consequences. To ensure equity of discussion time, a chairperson will be elected. His/her responsibilities will include: reading the scenario, passing out the prompts, calling students to read their prompts, making certain all students have opportunities to voice their opinions, encouraging students to reach a consensus. When all discussions are complete, students will meet as a large group to share, compare, and discuss their solutions.

Prior to this lesson, students will explore a variety of reading material including:

- The book *The Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting

- The narrative poem “The Hangman” by Maurice Ogden
- Quotations dealing with apathy and indifference by Martin Luther King, Rev. Martin Niemöller, Abraham Lincoln, William James, Albert Einstein, Edmund Burke, and Benjamin Franklin
- Books and magazine articles containing information on the following topics: The Holocaust, Civil Rights, Ku Klux Klan

Objectives for this lesson

1. Students will discuss various scenarios and will seek resolutions that exhibit tolerance, acceptance, and understanding
2. Students will practice democratic principles by selecting a chairperson.
3. Students will describe different perspectives on varied issues.
4. Students will understand that indifference can have disastrous consequences.
5. Students will understand the danger of remaining uninvolved in the face of attacks on others’ rights.
6. Students will understand that humane treatment of every person is a human responsibility.
7. Students will explore how the political process of working as a group can determine action-good or bad.

Materials

For Teachers

1. One envelope for each of the scenarios.
2. Scissors to cut the prompts into strips.
3. Containers to hold the envelopes.

For Students

1. A pencil to take notes.
2. Paper to jot down points they may wish to discuss.

Procedure

1. Students will be placed in groups of five.
2. Each group will elect a chairperson.
3. Students will be given a list of rules to govern their discussions.
4. Each chairperson will select an envelope from the basket on his/her table.

5. The chairperson will read the scenario from the chosen envelope and then hand out the prompts.
6. The chairperson will give time for the students to write down ideas or questions related to their prompts.
7. One individual will be called upon to read his or her prompt. Using their prompt as a jumping off point, they will discuss and ask question of their peers related to the scenario and the prompt.
8. Each person in the group will follow reading, reacting, and discussing their prompt.
9. Together, students will come up with a resolution for their prompt.
10. The chairperson will collect prompts and replace in envelope after recording their resolution down on the resolution prompt located in the envelope.
11. The chairperson will select another envelope and the procedure begins again.

Rules

1. All students will be given opportunities to talk and ask questions of each other.
2. No disrespectful, demeaning, or insulting comments or opinions related to what each student says are allowed.
3. It is fine to disagree with a team member and disagreements should be addressed as :
 - I have a different opinion from yours. I believe _____.
 - What if this happened instead of _____?
 - Have you considered _____?
4. Every person has a right to their own opinion.
5. The chairperson has the authority to move to another discussant once the person talking has made their point.

Assessment

See attached sheets of rubrics for teacher and students, as well as metacognitive fill in the blank assessments.

Impact on Students

1. Students have told me that this exercise has helped them to resolve conflicts and problems in school, on the ball field, at home, and with friends.
2. Students have told me that after doing this exercise they have given more and careful thought to how they respond to situations in which they have to react.
3. Students have the opportunities to share powerful, personal experiences and relate them in a safe atmosphere.
4. Students have opportunities to analyze how they could handle difficult situations differently.
5. One student told me he felt safe enough to tell personal instances where he was a bystander. He then got help from his classmates after analyzing the situation and now knows how he could have handled the situation differently.
6. Students engaged in opportunities to interact with each other and express viewpoints that may be unpopular.
7. Students were given opportunities to connect with their friends at deep levels while sharing primary experiences.
8. Students had opportunities to appreciate and understand different perspectives through the interplay of responses and the levels of discomfort in relating stories and analyzing responses.
9. Students have the opportunity to understand and react to emotionally challenging scenarios in a safe atmosphere.
10. This exercise gives students an opportunity to understand that there are real situations, similar to these, that affect everyone from the president down to their classmates; and each requires sensitive, thoughtful, and caring responses.
11. This exercise forces students to analyze and rethink their own actions.
12. These exercises require critical thinking.

Scenerios

Each scenario is to be placed in a separate envelope with the accompanying prompts. All envelopes should be placed in a container and situated within reaching distance of the chairperson. Each chairperson will read the scenarios and will pass out the prompts to the members of the group.

Daniel

Chairperson reads this:

Daniel is in your class and he has strange white strings hanging down from underneath his belt. He is wearing a little beanie like cap on his head. You notice he will never eat any kind of meat in the lunchroom, yet he brings his own meat sandwiches from home. Daniel will never eat his meat sandwich with milk and always has to ask for juice to drink. Kids are making fun of him because of his dress, his food, and his hat. There is a plan to beat him up when he walks home.

Prompts-Each person in the group will get at least one:

- You decide to do _____ because_____.
-
- How do you think Daniel feels about everything going on around him?
-
- If you chose to be a bystander in this situation, what will be the consequences?
-
- If you chose to take action, what will the consequences be and what type of action will you take?
-
- How do you feel about this happening right in your school?
-
- You choose to talk to the bullies. What do you say?
-
- You decide to speak with Daniel. What do you say?
-

Chair person writes the resolution here:

The Play

Chairperson reads this:

You try out for a community play along with several other students. One of the other people trying out for a part is an African American boy. He reads his part well with a great deal of expression. You hear people talking while you are waiting to try out. They are saying that Steve, the African American boy, will never get the part. They use a derogatory word to describe him, and start laughing. Another boy, a white boy gets the part. He is not nearly as good as Steve. You also get a part.

Prompts-Each person in the group will get at least one:

- How do you feel about what happened?

- Would you try to talk to Steve about it? If so what would you say?

- What comfort would you have in being a bystander in this situation?

- If you decide to do something, what would you do?

- What does this say about fairness and equity?

- Could this ever happen at our school?

- How do our famous quotations relate to this scenario?

- How could this happen in America?

- Does being an American have anything to do with this?

Chairperson writes the resolution here:

The Hangman

Chairperson reads this:

You have walked into town only to find the hangman's gallows in the town square. There are many people around watching him set up. You observe him prepare for his first customer and he calls _____.

Prompts-Each person in the group will get at least one:

- Who do you think will be his first customer and why?
-

- What would you say to him?
-

- If you could put him on trial, what would be his crimes?
-

- How could the poem of the Hangman turned out differently? What would have had to happen in order for it to have had a different ending?
-

- Historically speaking, who was the hangman? Who were the bystanders?
-

- Who are the bystanders in our society now? What is their perspective on things that they know about but do nothing?
-

- What would you say to the other people standing around and watching?
-

Chairperson writes the resolution here:

Fernando

Chairperson reads this:

You are on a baseball team that is multi-cultural, you think! Fernando is a new student and you have watched him play ball at P.E. He's good! Real Good! You suggest to him that he sign up for your team at the community center. On the first day of practice, the coach looks at Fernando and says, "I do not want any Hispanics on my team! Go Home!" You look around and see that there are no other Hispanics on the team, no one even speaks Spanish. Fernando leaves crying.

Prompts: Each person in the group will get at least one:

- What would you do? What would you say to your teammates?

-
- What would you say to your coach, or would you?

-
- Relate your actions to one of the famous quotations we have learned recently about actions or inactions people decide to take.

-
- How would you explain what happened to your mother, your teacher, Fernando?

-
- Would it bother you that this happened? Does being an American have anything to do with this happening or not happening?

-
- What do you think Fernando should say to the coach?

-
- Does Fernando have any other recourse, or should he just forget this incident?

Chairperson writes the resolution here:

Could F. D. R. Have Saved Millions of Jewish Lives?

Chairperson reads this:

For decades, historians have debated the Allied reaction to Adolf Hitler's "final solution." Amid the complexities of war and the fog of battle, could Washington and London have done more to save Europe's Jews? Why not try to save Jewish lives by bombing the death camps and rail lines to Auschwitz? Revered in memory as a Great War president, Franklin Roosevelt has always been at the center of the mystery. For generations, historians have had no first hand evidence that FDR was directly involved in the decision not to attack Auschwitz. In the book *The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman and the Destruction of Hitler's Germany 1941-1945* (Simon & Schuster), Michael Beschloss provides a surprising new account of what the president actually knew and what he said and did.

Prompts-Each person in the group gets at least one:

- Do you think that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a bystander in the Jewish situation in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s? Why or why not?

- Do you think his indecision was a decision itself? Relate it to the famous quotations we have discussed in class.

- How could this have turned out differently?

- It is said that he told his closest friends in Washington that he didn't want to be accused of bombing the Jews and he felt that if he bombed the rail lines to Auschwitz, the Nazis would have just built them back up. Do you feel he was a bystander in this war when he could have done something to help these people?

- What finally brought the Americans into war? Do you feel we, as Americans, were bystanders to the horrors of what was happening in Europe? Do you think our perspective changed only because of Pearl Harbor?

- How could you have handled the events that occurred in 1939-1945 if you lived in America during this period of time? Would you have been a bystander? Consider all the perspectives.

- What do you think Americans would have thought if Roosevelt had decided to bomb the rail lines?

- What would you have done if you were Roosevelt and why?

Chairperson writes the resolution here:

Material in this lesson is in line with the following Georgia QCCs and National Board Standards.

Quality Core Curriculum Standards (QCCs)

- Information Processing-Analyzes interpretations of the same event from multiple types of sources.
- Information Processing-Selects and discusses the main idea from a reading passage or listening activity.
- Information Processing-Identifies the causes of an event.
- Social Studies-Identifies an ethnic group.
- Social Studies-Relates an action to a consequence.
- Social Studies-Analyzes and explains major causes, events, and personalities of WWII.
- Social Studies-Analyzes the role of local police.
- Distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Analyzes interpretations of the same event from multiple types of sources.
- Selects and discusses a main idea from a reading passage or listening activity.

- Analyzes information from two or more sources for agreements, contradictions, facts, and opinions.
- Determines adequacy, relevancy, and consistency of information for justifying conclusions or generalizations.
- Formulates possible alternatives or solutions.
- Identifies and uses alternative methods of conflict resolution.
- Recognizes the right of others to present different viewpoints.
- Explains how social institutions (religion, government, and economics) influence the attitudes and behaviors of people.

National Standards

Knowledge of Content and Curriculum:

- Address real-world complex issues
- Apply interactive learning processes
- Make connections between and among topics
- Provide powerful tasks for students to explore
- Use meaningful, focus-tasks for students

The Learning Environment:

- Maintain a caring community
- Maintain a sensitivity toward all classmates and issues
- Encourage innovation, creativity, independent inquiry
- Establish and foster a classroom community
- Democratically involve students
- Facilitate communication
- Maintain a productive, open, and enriching learning environment
- Encourage choice and expression
- Recognize individual differences
- Give and receive feedback from peers
- Show concern and respect for others

Diversity:

- Understand and use democratic principles
- Foster civic and personal responsibility
- Think about ethical issues from a variety of perspectives
- Encourage students to address actively
- Accept responsibility
- Display concern for others
- Understand the value of taking a stand on an issue and defending their position
- Listen and share ideas

- Strengthen capacities for cooperation, negotiation, and problem solving
- Be responsible for your actions and statements
- Confront issues of diversity proactively